

that workers will have access to the coverage they need at a price they can afford. Forty years after the creation of the TAA program, it is high time Congress gave it the resources it needs to be better prepared to better prepare the American workforce for the challenges and opportunities of a global economy. I hope we can all approve of an expanded TAA program that includes health care.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SMITH addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

NOT ALL LAWMAKERS BACK PLAN ON IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as many in this Nation and many around the world, I do not like Saddam Hussein. I do not like him for what he does to the children of his nation, the women of his nation, and the people who are in need in his nation. I do not like what he does with the humanitarian aid, holding it hostage, so those who need medicine and health care, nutrition, those who go hungry, are not served well by his leadership. There is no doubt that he has the capacity and has been engaged in manufacturing weapons of terror and also the kind of chemical warfare that all the world abhors. He is not the kind of leader that any of us would advocate for.

But I raise my voice out of concern for the recent announcements over the past weekend, now finding out that these are somewhat old in their pronouncements, that there are those who previously in months past were aware of the thinking of the administration dealing with covert action in Iraq. In fact, there are articles in our newspapers across the Nation suggesting lawmakers back action against Iraq.

Let me step aside, Mr. Speaker, and stand outside of that circle and speak for what I believe to be many of those in the United States who will ask the question, are we prepared, and what is the basis of that action? I have already stated that the leader of this nation, the leader of the Iraq nation, that is, is not a person who advocates the values that we believe in. I have already indicated that I believe that the country needs a change in leadership.

But in respect to the approach, the question has to be, What is the involvement in oversight of the United States Congress? What are the decisions that will be made with respect to these actions?

We well know that, tragically, Saddam Hussein tried to assassinate one of our Presidents, and we cannot tolerate that; and I would not stand for that kind of action or advocate it or allow it

to go unpunished. But we also know that there is no indication that he had anything to do with the horrible act of September 11. We also know that his activities can be classified as bumbling.

We also realize that if we are to engage in a covert action that may include the killing of this leader out of self-defense, that we may also put this Nation's military personnel in the position of a ground war. It has been suggested that 200,000 men and women would be needed for a ground war in Iraq. We realize that Korea was not successful to the point we wanted. The DMZ still exists between North and South Korea, and there is the tragedy of terrible hunger and devastation going on in North Korea. Though we pay tribute to the men who fought in the Korean War, and we thank them, we still have North and South Korea.

We also realize that though we pay tribute to the thousands of young men who lost their lives and those who served in the Vietnam War, we know that Vietnam was not successful to the point we wanted.

We also recognize that out of the turmoil of the Cold War, that the Berlin Wall did fall, and it fell because those in Berlin desired it to fall and the people brought it down.

I believe we need more oversight and insight into decisions to be made regarding Iraq. I oppose these pronouncements suggesting that the next step is for this Nation to enter into a war. We realize that four prior covert actions involving everything from radio propaganda to paramilitary plots have failed to dislodge the Iraqi leader, just as smart bombs, Cruise Missiles and stiff economic sanctions have failed as well. I believe we need more deliberation.

But, most importantly, I am aghast, if you will, at the fact that we are making these pronouncements with what I believe to be little thought. What is the plan? If we have a plan, bring it to the United States Congress. Yes, I understand there is need for the protection of our intelligence sources, and as well that there are decisions that the Commander in Chief has to make. But I am extremely opposed to these kind of war mongering efforts without any facts and without any substance.

It is important to realize that the lives of Americans are on the line. Yes, I am standing toe-to-toe and head-to-head and shoulder-to-shoulder on fighting terrorism in America. I supported the resolution that gave the President the authority to fight terrorism in Afghanistan. I am pleased that Chairman Karzai has recently taken over the leadership of Afghanistan so we will have a head of state to help us fight that war.

But it is extremely important, Mr. Speaker, as I close, in light of the tragedy of September 11, in light of the questions about sharing intelligence between the FBI and the CIA, to know whether we are making the right decision of this covert action, whether or not we are putting our young men and

women in jeopardy, in harm's way, without any facts and any study and any plan.

No, lawmakers in totality are not for this plan, and we need to question it and stand up and be counted and not be afraid of being called unpatriotic, because I believe that that is what democracy is all about, is to ask the questions and get the solutions.

Mr. Speaker, amid a growing debate over whether to expand the post-September 11 "war on terrorism" to Iraq and amid fears that Iraq could provide weapons of mass destruction expertise to terrorist groups, President Bush has threatened unspecified action against Iraq to prevent its re-emergence as a threat. The House passed H.J. Res. 75 by a vote of 392-12, which said that Iraq's refusal to readmit U.N. inspectors is a material breach of its international obligations and a mounting threat to peace and security. The resolution did not explicitly authorize U.S. military action.

Amid U.S. threats, Iraq held a meeting with U.N. Secretary General Annan on the restart of inspections. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld suggested that the United States would accept new inspections only if such inspections were unconditional and comprehensive, a standard that some Administration officials believe Iraq will never meet.

Several Western and most Arab governments are opposed to a U.S. military campaign against Iraq, a message reinforced by Arab leaders to Vice President CHENEY on his trip to the Middle East in March. Arab leaders have voiced opposition to an attack on Iraq at the Arab League summit, during which Iraq and Kuwait took some steps to reconcile.

Top U.S. military leaders see major risks and difficulties in a large U.S. ground offensive, which could require up to 250,000 U.S. troops, intended to overthrow Saddam and install a new government. President Bush said that he has not decided on whether to authorize a U.S. military offensive against Iraq.

The CIA proliferation assessment for Congress repeats U.S. suspicions of Iraqi rebuilding of and research on weapons of mass destruction but presents little hard evidence of such activity. Britain considered releasing in April 2002 a dossier of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction rebuilding but decided not to. The British concluded that its evidence was not sufficiently convincing. There are also allegations of illicit Iraqi imports of conventional military equipment. Iraq has been illicitly obtaining spare parts for fighter jets and helicopters from Belarus, Ukraine, and the former Yugoslavia. Additional reports discuss weapons buys from Ukraine.

As international concerns for the plight of the Iraqi people has grown, the United States has found it increasingly difficult to maintain support for international sanctions. The "oil-for-food" program has been progressively modified to improve the living standards of Iraqis. The United States has eased its own sanctions to align them with the program.

Iraq does not deserve international respect; that I agree with. However, unilateral foreign policy decisions affirmed by some leaders of Congress are not good either. We need full congressional oversight and review, including more voices to be heard, on whether covert

action against Iraq would be successful or lead America into action against Iraq with no allies. I believe we have no consensus on an invasion of Iraq and I am requesting a full review by Congress of the Administration's move against Iraq now—and where it will lead us.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF SENATE AMENDMENTS TO H.R. 327, SMALL BUSINESS PAPERWORK RELIEF ACT

Mr. LINDER, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 107-510) on the resolution (H. Res. 444) providing for consideration of the Senate amendments to the bill (H.R. 327) to amend chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code, for the purpose of facilitating compliance by small businesses with certain Federal paperwork requirements and to establish a task force to examine the feasibility of streamlining paperwork requirements applicable to small businesses, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

THE NEED FOR A MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG PLAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, this evening, and I have a couple of my colleagues on the Democratic side that will join me, I am going to be talking again about the need for a Medicare prescription drug plan. I think, as you know, we have a situation where tomorrow, hopefully, if not Wednesday, we are finally going to see an opportunity in committee for the Republican leadership in the House to present what they claim to be a prescription drug plan, and hopefully an opportunity for the Democratic proposal also to be considered, both in the Committee on Energy and Commerce as well as in the Committee on Ways and Means.

I know that some of my colleagues know that for the last 2 months myself as well as some of the Members who are going to be joining me tonight have been demanding really that the Republican leadership bring up a prescription drug plan and allow us to consider prescription drugs on the floor of the House. It has been far too long since the Republican leadership has essentially stalled on a proposal. But now we hear that tomorrow, if not Wednesday, they are finally going to allow the two committees of jurisdiction to consider the prescription drug issue.

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I would point out, however, though, that my concern over the Republican proposal, which we still do not have, but we have been provided some sort of

vague description of, is not a Medicare prescription drug plan; in other words, it is not going to cover all of the seniors who are currently under Medicare and provide them with a prescription drug guaranteed plan under Medicare. Rather, what the Republicans propose to do is to simply throw some money to private insurance companies in the hope that they will offer drug-only policies and that some seniors would be able to take advantage of those. They also do not address the issue of cost at all; they do not have any mechanism to bring costs down.

Democrats have been saying all along in our proposal which we have put forward, basically, it would provide a Medicare-guaranteed drug benefit, a generous benefit; 80 percent of the cost would be paid for by the Federal Government, every senior would be guaranteed the benefit across the country, and we would bring costs down by basically saying or mandating that the Secretary of Health and Human Services negotiate lower drug prices because he now represents or has the negotiating power for 40 million American seniors.

Now, I would like to yield some time, but I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that the problems with the GOP drug plan have been pointed out many times by many experts. Over the weekend, actually in Sunday's New York Times, Sunday, June 16, there was an article called "Experts Wary of GOP Drug Plan." I am not going to get into it now; I may a little later this evening. But basically they say in this article that drug-only coverage is not affordable and that insurers will not provide it. So essentially under the Republican plan, most seniors, if not every senior, will not be able to get a decent prescription drug program, if any at all.

With that, I would like to yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE), who has joined me on many of these lonely evenings when we have tried to get the point across that we need to debate the prescription drug proposal; even if it is a lousy proposal on the part of the Republicans, let us debate it. Let us have an opportunity to contrast it with the Democratic proposal. I am pleased to say to the gentlewoman that it looks like, I am keeping my fingers crossed, but it looks like tomorrow or Wednesday, at least in committee, that opportunity will present itself. So I yield to the gentlewoman.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman. The reason I have joined the gentleman is because I can think of, among the many issues that we have to contend with, no issue that has prolonged itself disastrously as much as providing seniors the opportunity to have a prescription drug benefit with Medicare. I would like to just put these words on our screen, because there must be someone across America sighing right now: Seniors have waited long enough.

I am trying to count the months that have gotten down to 48 months, I think, and if I am not mistaken, that may be 4 years, and I think it has probably been 4 years and counting that we have tried day after day, month after month, and session after session to be able to respond to seniors who are in need. So if I can say anything, I can share with my colleagues this evening that I can take the time to talk about what we have come up with, because I believe seniors have waited too long. I can at least share our thoughts as to how we hope the hearings will proceed on Wednesday.

Let me just take a slightly different twist, because the gentleman is right. There are many experts on this legislative process that we hope will come into fruition on Wednesday, and I am hoping that we can challenge the pharmaceutical companies to look at what we have put forward and begin a real partnership in terms of answering the concerns of seniors. One, I do not see how they cannot acknowledge that seniors have waited too long and that, in fact, we have a proposal that is fair and balanced. I was trying to discern what the Republicans are offering. Let me just share why I think this is effective.

One of the things that we have to address with seniors is to give them a plan that is real, that does not have a lot of smoke and mirrors, because if we do that, it is confusing, it is stressful for seniors. I have been in pharmacies, and I believe when we debated last week, we talked about our good friend from Arkansas who owned a pharmacy, and I applauded him for the small pharmacies, the mom-and-pop or the family-owned pharmacies, how much they extend themselves to help our seniors and explain to them about the drugs, to try to share with them that they cannot take half of the amount that the prescription requires. But I can imagine, if we were to utilize what we think might be the Republican plan, the confusion of many seniors around the Nation trying to understand what they have.

Ours is plain and simple. It has no gaps, it has no gimmicks. The premium is \$25 a month, the deductible is \$100 a year; coinsurance, beneficiaries pay 20 percent, plain and simple; Medicare pays 80 percent, plain and simple. Out-of-pocket limit, \$2,000 per beneficiary per year. We must realize that sometimes this is an economic hit, if you will, for our seniors who are husbands and wives with high prescription drug costs. It takes a large amount out of their collective income and, therefore, putting this amount so that they know what they can budget and know the options that they have, pretty plain and simple.

Additional low-income assistance. Of course, many of our congressional districts, whether we are urban or rural, have individuals who have incomes that are not going through the roof. So we are prepared to give assistance for